

# CITY ATTORNEY SMITH DENIES IMPEACHMENT

**Says Politics Has Never Entered Into His Consideration of Franklin Avenue Improvement Proposition.**

**Declares That the Mayor and Councilman Lebeck Have Been Actuated Only by a Desire to Subserve the Best Interests of the City and That the Third Ward Will Receive Fair Treatment.**

◆ City Attorney Smith Says—  
◆ That Councilman Nordstrom errs in imputing political motives to him in the matter of the Franklin avenue improvement;  
◆ That he is surprised at Mr. Nordstrom's lack of discretion in making public accusations against those gentlemen with whom he is associated in the conduct of the affairs of the city;  
◆ That Mayor Suprenant wants to see the street built;  
◆ That Councilman Lebeck is honest in his opposition to the improvement;  
◆ That, if the cost to the city will not exceed a few hundred dollars, he would like to see the street put through.

City Attorney Smith denies that he has been actuated by political motives in the Franklin avenue improvement matter. He expresses surprise that Councilman Nordstrom should have made his public accusations against members of the council and the mayor, and believes the gentleman from the Third ward has been indiscreet.

Mayor Suprenant, whom Councilman Nordstrom said had paid a political debt at the expense of the people of the Third ward, has gone to California for his health. "I'm not surprised that he should have left the city after vetoing our Franklin avenue ordinance," Mr. Nordstrom said to an Astorian man.

**The Position of the Mayor.**  
"I believe Mr. Nordstrom has done the mayor a great injustice," said City Attorney Smith last evening. "Mayor Suprenant explained to me his reason for vetoing the bill providing for the improvement. He said he never would have returned it without his approval had it not been for the fact that, once the bill was passed, he could not effectively put his stamp of disapproval upon the improvement. So far as the mayor was concerned, he had to act upon the ordinance. After the measure was passed he lost all voice in the proposal and had to act then or not at all."

"It is wrong for Mr. Nordstrom to say that the action of the mayor, if upheld by the council, will settle the Franklin avenue improvement. At the next meeting the council may adopt a resolution which will net the desired information. This will probably be

done. I believe the people of the Third ward will be treated with fairness, and regret very much that so many unkind things have been said."

**Mr. Smith's Letter.**  
Yesterday afternoon City Attorney Smith handed the following letter to the editor of The Astorian. The letter is in reply to the statement of Mr. Nordstrom appearing in yesterday's Astorian:

"Astoria, Feb. 18.—(Editor Astorian)—The statement of Mr. Nordstrom that I assisted in defeating the ordinance for the improvement of Franklin avenue from Thirty-sixth street to Fourth-third street is not warranted by the facts. I have not tried to influence anyone against the improvement as such, and would not think of doing so for political or other reasons; and it matters little to me whether the improvement is made before or after the June election.

"Those who are the most anxious for the improvement are my personal friends, to whom I am much indebted, and I would be glad to render them any service within my power.

"I am very much surprised at Mr. Nordstrom making political accusations against those who have been connected with him in the present city administration, and who have never said one unkind word against him and I have always thought Mr. Nordstrom too sagacious to do such a thing.

"There is no question that the mayor wants to see the street built, and there is not the slightest doubt that Mr. Lebeck is honest in his opposition to the street.

"The only difference between the parties for and against the street is as to how much the improvement will cost the general taxpayers. It is unjust to build any street where any considerable portion of the expense will be paid for by general taxation, and as soon as it is known that the street can be improved at the sole expense

of the benefited property there will be no opposition to it. Should the mayor's veto be sustained, I would favor, first, making the assessment of \$9500, the estimated cost of the improvement, upon the district, and see how much of this can be collected from the property benefited by the improvement, and when this is done, if the improvement will not cost the general taxpayers more than a few hundred dollars, go ahead with the improvement and make it.

"If the property will pay for the improvement there is no doubt that it will be accomplished in the near future and there ought not to be any politics injected into it."

**Another Idea Advanced.**  
In connection with the matter which is now agitating the people of the Third ward, another suggestion has been advanced. It is that representatives of the Third ward determine just how much of the cost the council is willing the city should bear. Most of the members would be satisfied to make an appropriation of \$1500. It this sum could be agreed upon the property could be so assessed as to bear the remainder.

"The limit which the property interested will bear is \$8600," said the city attorney, when questioned yesterday. "This sum takes in all the property in the district. However, whether or not that amount could be raised there is a question, for the reason that some of the land would not be benefited as much as other tracts, and therefore might not be able to bear what appears to be the full amount. There is a certain manner of making assessments, and that method would have to be followed out in this case as in others. The estimated cost of the improvement is \$9500, and members of the council very correctly entertain the belief that the excess may be considerably more than \$1500."

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